EC/Guinea fisheries agreement: protocol for the period from 1st January 2004 to 31 December 2008

2003/0290(CNS) - 01/04/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 375 votes in favour, 7 against with 39 abstentions a non-binding resolution drafted by Patricia McKENNA (Greens/EFA, Dublin) on the proposal for a Council regulation on the conclusion of the protocol defining for the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008 the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Government of the Republic of Guinea on fishing off the Guinean coast. The Parliament included a number of provisions, highlighting that the Protocol must: - meet all criteria of applicable treaties concerning fisheries, development and the environment signed by the European Union. The protocol must guarantee that additional fishing opportunities are subject to the participation of local fishermen and companies and the availability of tangible evidence of the practice of sustainable management in economic, social and environmental terms in the fishing area; - assure that the Government of the Republic of Guinea spend the compensation in order to improve the economic, social and environmental situation of the people of the Republic of Guinea; - protect the interest of local coastal communities living on fisheries whereas they are often not in the position to do so for themselves; - seek that the European Community, in contributing financially towards the reinforcement of fisheries surveillance activities, effectively assures the fight against illegal fishing; - guarantee that the joint ventures set up between Community operators and Guinean operators encourage the participation of the local community and improve the economic situation of the people of the Republic of Guinea; - guarantee the protection of mammals and birds from nets and long lines by use of any environmentally-friendly methods; - look at the possibilities for developing a surveillance policy with neighbouring countries to provide better collaboration and protection of fish stocks in the region. Moreover, Parliament states that : - levels of fishing opportunities for all fleet segments in the present protocol should be re-evaluated following the conclusions of the scientific sub-committee of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), meeting in February 2004; - In the course of the protocol's application, and before the start of negotiations on its possible renewal, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a general assessment report including a cost benefit analysis and an evaluation on the implementation of the targeted measures. - fishing opportunities for fin-fish and cephalopod trawlers should be considered in 2005 or 2006, in the light of evidence of the status of all stocks affected; - fishing opportunities for fin-fish and cephalopod trawlers should not be increased in 2005 or 2006 unless there is clear and unequivocal evidence of a significant improvement in the status of all stocks affected by these fleets. The European Parliament should be consulted on any increase and should be provided with the scientific justification; - the Council shall authorise the Commission, where appropriate, to start negotiations with a view to the adoption of a newprotocol; - the Commission will produce by the end of 2004 a study into the possible means of converting sums currently included as "targeted measures" into specific projects funded by the Commission that are subject to proper auditing with verification of the project results; - the Commission shall report on the feasibility of funding a coordinated, regional surveillance programme in the waters of CECAF that would include both aerial and maritime components; - in cases where Member States fail to submit to the Commission data on catches by vessels flying their flag, the Commission should consider initiating legal proceedings against the offending Member States and, if the situation persists, revoking access rights.